



STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2018-05 – 7 Priscilla Road - Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 7 Priscilla Road (Assessor's Parcel ID # 37-31)
Applicant: Joseph A. Fanning
Property Owner: Joseph A. Fanning
Date: Report prepared 3/12/2018 for 3/20/2018 Historical Commission Meeting
Staff Contact: Claudia Zarazua, Planner; Michael Zehner, Planning Director
Staff Recommendation: **Preferably Preserved**

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Applications for Eligibility Notice and Preservation Determination were submitted on January 26, 2018 indicating the intent to demolish, in its entirety, a building located on the property and used as a dwelling. An Eligibility Notice was issued on January 29, 2018 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. A public hearing before the Historical Commission is scheduled for March 20, 2018.

DESCRIPTION

In consideration of the application for Eligibility Notice, it was determined that the original dwelling was constructed no earlier or later than December 17, 1948, the date provided on Building Permit "No. 9835" for the construction of a "dwelling" on 7 Priscilla Road (the Applicant/Owner indicated the construction date to be 1949). Permit "No. 9836" by the same owner was issued on the same date for a "garage." On September 3, 1968 a permit was filed to enclose an existing porch and build a second floor addition.

The property was originally owned by Maurice A. Dunlavy, who intended to build Sheridan Hills, a "residential community of distinctive beauty, charm and seclusion" with designs from renowned landscape architect Wayne E. Styles and plans from distinguished architect Royal Barry Willis. (See Figure 1). Dunlavy sought approval for a subdivision "of land in Wellesley located as follows: on the southerly side of Worcester Street and east of Carver, Brewster and Priscilla Roads" according to a notice published on the Wellesley Townsman on July 24, 1947. (See Figure 2).

Prior to construction of the dwelling, the lot was briefly owned by Odber T. McLean in 1946, he was Commander of the Merchant Marine. Frank A. Lind acquired the property in 1948 and subsequently applied for a building permit for a dwelling and garage. According to his brother Rev. Joseph Lind, the father, Frank P. Lind, along with his two sons designed and built similar houses around the neighborhood with the intent to reflect "New England history" and in the Colonial style. The property was sold to Paul K.

Welch in 1949 and soon after it was sold to John and Jane Copeland from Maine in 1950.

Sheridan IN WELLESLEY HILLS

A NEW residential community of distinctive beauty, charm and seclusion. Away from the traffic noise of the Worcester Turnpike and yet near enough for utmost convenience in commuting. Quarter acre homesites laid out by the well-known landscape architect, Wayne E. Stiles, to take full advantage of trees, hills and view. There are now available two most attractive and livable houses ready for immediate occupancy; and a third house, being built by Maurice A. Dunlavy from plans of Royal Barry Wills, will be completed by late summer.

*S*EVERAL unusual and slightly locations are ready for those purchasers who prefer to have a house built to their own specifications. All improvements including gas, water, electricity, sidewalks and roads are installed and have been paid for, so there are no assessments for these services.

DOUGLASS & HUNNEMAN
5 Arlington Street Boston COMMONwealth 4420

Figure 1 Wellesley Townsman, Friday, June 17, 1938; Page: 3

The property was then sold to Ruth and Kendall W. Hall in 1952. The house was passed on to the Ruth Hall Trust in 1992. The property was then acquired by Victoria and Whitney Hall in 2004. It remained in the family until the current owners, Joseph and Maria Fanning purchased it in 2018.

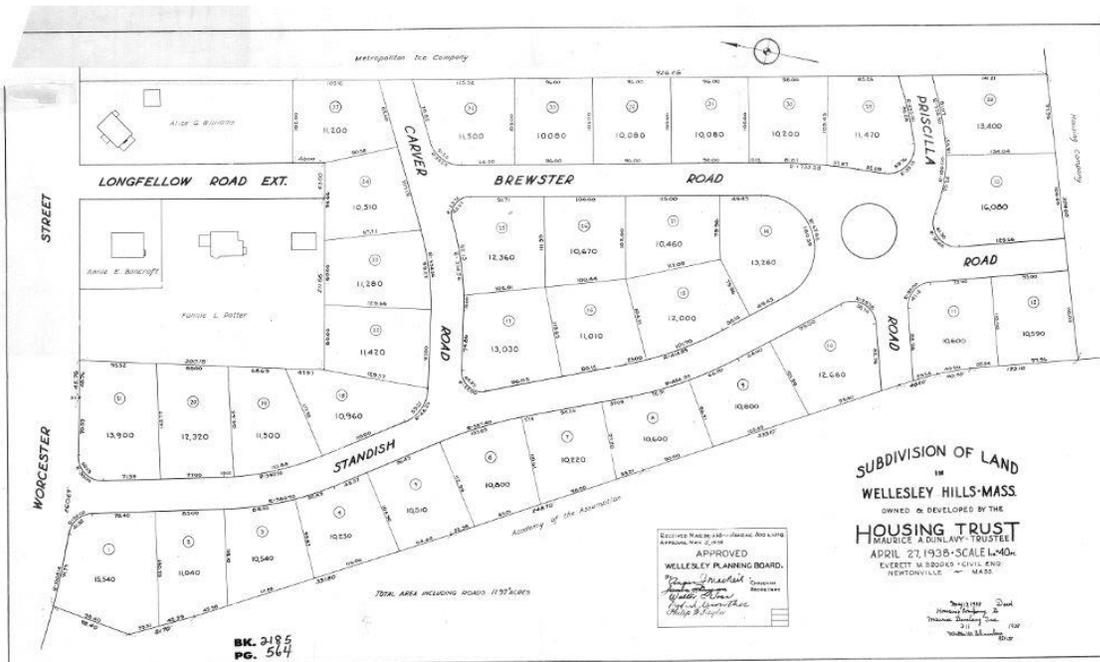
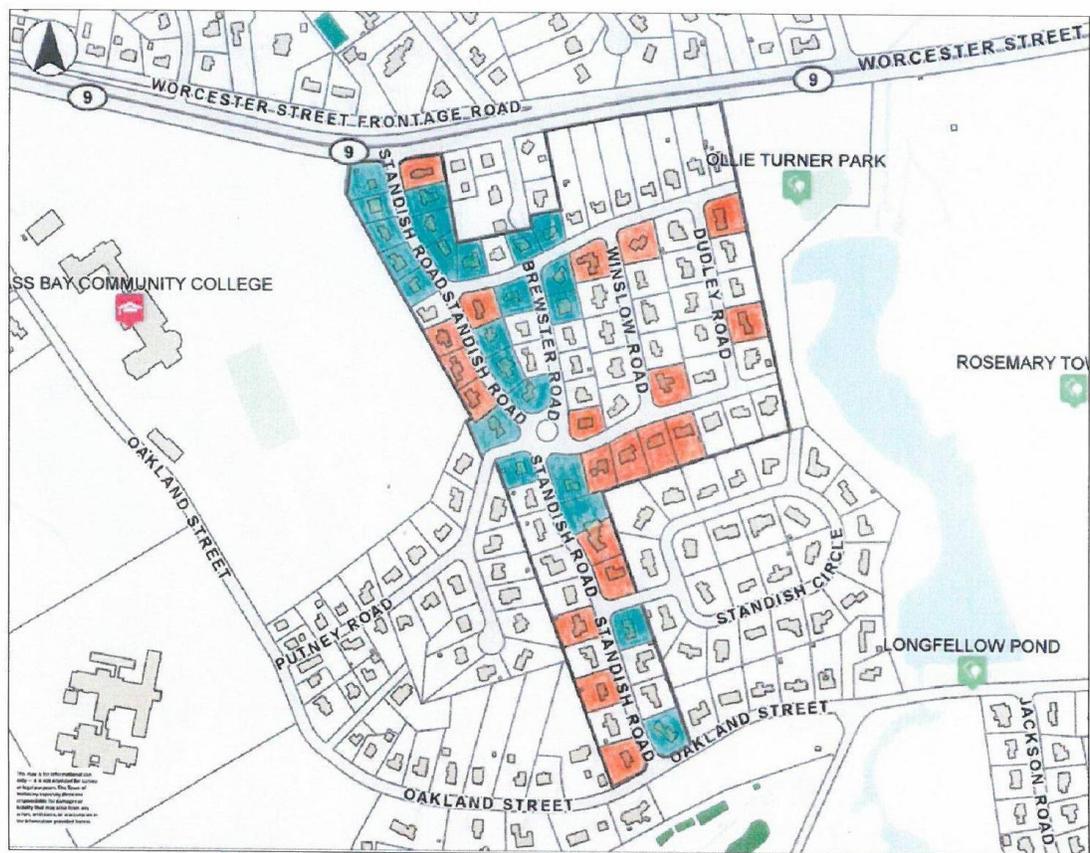


Figure 2. Subdivision Plan by Maurice A. Dunlavy from 1938. Courtesy of Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

The dwelling is a 1.5-story Cape Cod cottage with side-gambrel roof, minimally altered with a car garage. In 1968 an addition was built to extend the dining room on the first floor and a new bathroom on second floor. According to the building permit, this addition was constructed by Maurice A. Dunlavy, the original developer of the subdivision and collaborator of Royal Barry Wills.

Staff believes the original architecture of the house is best characterized as a Cape Cod Cottage of the Colonial Revival architectural style. Based on research published by the Standish Road Neighborhood Conservation study from 2015, Staff acknowledges that while the house cannot be identified as an original design of Royal Barry Wills, there is significant proof that the style borrows heavily from his designs in terms of scale, restraint and proportion. This is also evident in other properties on Priscilla Road that are also attributed to Frank A. Lind. (See Figure 3). However, Staff acknowledges that the current owner has spoken with several individuals associated with the owners and contractors involved with the property, as well as family of Royal Barry Wills, which seems to confirm that Mr. Wills was not involved in the design of this property.



- Houses designed by or suspected to be designed by Royal Barry Wills
- Royal Barry Wills
- Suspected Royal Barry Wills

Figure 3 2015 Standish Road Neighborhood Conservation District Study. Houses by Royal Barry Wills Plan

PRESERVATION DETERMINATION STANDARDS

In consideration of a Preservation Determination for the building, the Historical Commission is to determine whether or not the building should be Preferably Preserved, a term defined as building “the demolition of which that is proposed...would be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage of the Town because such Building is (i) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America, (ii) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings, or (iii) located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the boundary line of any federal or local historic district and contextually similar to the Buildings located in the adjacent federal or local historic district.”

If the Commission determines that the Building should be Preferably Preserved, then no Demolition Permit with respect to such Building shall be issued until twelve (12) months after the date of the Preservation Determination.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is of the opinion that the subject building **is not** (i) associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America, nor (iii) located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the boundary line of any federal or local historic district and contextually similar to the Buildings located in the adjacent federal or local historic district, but that the building **is** (ii) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings, and not.

With respect to standard (ii), Staff is of the opinion that the construction method and style of the dwelling is architecturally important by reason of period and style and is a distinct and important example of Cape Cod Cottage Colonial Revival architecture. In addition, the potential demolition of the house at 7 Priscilla Road would be a detriment to the character of the neighborhood that has remained of similar scale and architecture.

Therefore, based upon the above, **Staff is of the opinion that the demolition of the subject building would be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage of the neighborhood and Town and thus Staff recommends that the building should be deemed Preferably Preserved.**